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## ABSTRACT

This report summarizes a 4-year effort to serve disadvantaged, high-risk students through appropriate college programs in the metropolitan St. Louis area. Project AHEAD (Associated Higher Education Assistance for the Disadvantaged) was aimed at the disadvantaged in an effort to find high-risk students in impoverished neighborhoods and provide them the financial aid, educational help, and counseling necessary to succeed in college. It aimed to demonstrate that such students could succeed and that area colleges and universities, as a consequence of participating in or observing the project, would permanently increase their level of enrollment and service to such students. Summary conclusions include: (1) Compensatory education is not as stimulating and satisfying to disadvantaged students as credit-, career-, and degree-oriented curricula. (2) Strong counseling and supplementary instructional help can salvage many disadvantaged students. (3) A worthwhile proportion of disadvantaged students can succeed in college. (4) Many apparent dropouts resume college work when their circumstances permit. (5) Older disadvantaged students do better than younger ones. (6) Maximum encouragement of disadvantaged students requires full financial aid for tuition and expenses. (Author/PG)

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PROJECT AHEAD

A Final Report

by

The Higher Education Coordinating Council

of Metropolitan St. Louis

August 1973

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
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A Program for Helping the Disadvantaged

Conducted in 1969-73 with Support from the Ford and Danforth Foundations

HE 004876

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## FOREWORD

This report summarizes a four-year effort to serve disadvantaged, high risk students through appropriate college programs in the metropolitan St. Louis area. The project was conducted successfully under the leadership of Mr. Richard H. Reynolds.

Since the project was designed for action rather than experimentation, evaluative data were not gathered systematically. Nevertheless, early in this final year of the project, I asked my staff associate, Mrs. Doris P. Bryan, to conduct a modest evaluation study. She did so with great diligence and skill, uncovering more evaluative details than we at first thought possible. She came frustratingly close to acquiring data that would have answered all of our evaluative questions.

In drafting the final report, I have included all essential evaluative details and several generalizations that they suggest. Some of these generalizations should be tested in further projects of a similar nature. Every evidence indicates that such projects are worth their cost because they yield precious changes in the people and institutions that participate.

Francis C. Gamelin, President  
Higher Education Coordinating Council  
of Metropolitan St. Louis

# Higher Education Coordinating Council of Metropolitan St. Louis

## PROJECT AHEAD

### Final Report

#### Nature of Project

Origin and Purpose. In 1968 HECC members were concerned about the number of capable disadvantaged students who, for various reasons, were not improving their prospects through appropriate postsecondary education. Dr. Lawrence Howard of the Danforth Foundation addressed the Council on this matter in September 1968. In October two presidents of HECC institutions learned that the Ford Foundation, concerned about the problems of helping disadvantaged students through compensatory education, was interested in other approaches.

HECC thereupon asked the Rev. Paul C. Reinert, President of St. Louis University, to chair a committee to design a metropolitan project and to prepare proposals for support from the Ford and Danforth Foundations. The resulting project, Associated Higher Education Assistance for the Disadvantaged (AHEAD), was aimed at the disadvantaged in the metropolitan St. Louis area. It proposed to find high risk students in impoverished neighborhoods and provide them the financial aid, educational help, and counseling necessary to succeed in college. It aimed to demonstrate that such students could succeed and that area colleges and universities, as a consequence of participating in or observing the project, would permanently increase their level of enrollment and service to such students.

Both the Ford and Danforth Foundations responded favorably to the project. Ford agreed to support new student services in the amount of \$399,908 over a two-year period. Danforth agreed to provide \$100,000 in student financial aid. Consequently, a Project AHEAD Policy Committee was formed, composed of representatives from HECC member institutions and chaired by the Rev. Reinert (see Appendix I). An able project director, Richard H. Reynolds, was drawn from the counseling staff of Sumner High School in St. Louis and placed in Forest Park Community College where the basic action would occur. Staff members were employed and the project was begun in summer 1969.

Originally the project was to last two years, 1969-71. Later it was extended and the Danforth Foundation provided an additional \$20,000 in financial aid to students. The project ended officially with the 1973 summer session four years after it began.

Design. The project involved recruiting students in unusual ways -- visits to neighborhood hangouts, pool rooms, bars, hospitals, and homes -- as well as by aggressive searches through school counselors, churches, agencies, and organizations. All prospects were interviewed by staff members to ascertain that they were, in fact, poor and disadvantaged and that, with extra encouragement and partial tuition waivers, they would enroll in college.

Recruits were enrolled first in Forest Park Community College (FPCC), a large institution serving the central area of St. Louis and St. Louis County with an unusual array of general and career curricula. They were given intensive personal help ranging from program planning to remedial work to supportive counseling, all with ample encouragement. For example, the president of FPCC sent a letter to all students who completed fall semester 1969 satisfactorily, commending them on their achievement and expressing the hope that they would continue good work.

At first all project students were assigned to a non-credit General Curriculum for poorly prepared students, but the program did not work for all. After the first semester, therefore, project students were enrolled in a variety of programs tailored to their desires as well as their needs.

Those who succeeded at FPCC and were interested in four-year programs were assisted with transfer and provided unusual financial aid and support services at their new institutions. Each of the senior institutions was developing an appropriate program to meet the needs of such students:

- St. Louis University -- College Assistance Program (CAP)
- Southern Illinois University/Edwardsville -- Experiment in Higher Education (EHE)
- University of Missouri/St. Louis -- Project United (University Needs in the Education of the Disadvantaged)
- Washington University -- Career Scholarship Program (later Special Educational Services)
- Fontbonne, Harris Teachers, Lindenwood, Maryville, and Webster Colleges -- Seven College Consortium

One special event was held for 32 of the students in summer 1970. They were transported to Chicago, housed in a Holiday Inn, and taken to the Museum of Science and Industry, the Oriental Institute, Malcolm X Community College, the University of Chicago, the Topographical Center, and a performance of "Hair" at the Schubert Theater.

Cumulative records on the students were maintained, but since the program was a demonstration project rather than an experiment, little systematic data was collected and no plan of evaluation was built into the design. Considerable effort was expended near the close of the project, however, to gather evaluative data.

A group of students similar to those in Project AHEAD but from the Metro-East area were enrolled in an Experiment in Higher Education (EHE) conducted by Southern Illinois University/Edwardsville in East St. Louis. This Experiment was supported with about one-fourth of the Ford Foundation grant. Since EHE was operated independently of AHEAD, it is treated separately near the end of this report. The main report deals entirely with AHEAD students who began college studies at FPCC in St. Louis.

Staff. The staff consisted of the project director, an instructor, and two counselors at Forest Park Community College, and five coordinators who taught remedial courses at FPCC, tutored students, and provided

liaison between FPCC and the senior institutions in the project. Three of the coordinators were attached to single universities and the other two served clusters of institutions. During the original two year project, the staff consisted of:

|                                                                                   | 1969-70                       | 1970-71                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| FPCC Instructor                                                                   | Rose Lane Davis               | Rose Lane Davis               |
| FPCC Counselors                                                                   | Juliet Hynes<br>Joyce Kennedy | George Brantley<br>Ruth Lewis |
| Coordinators:                                                                     |                               |                               |
| St. Louis University                                                              | Fred Kimbrough                | Amos Cofield                  |
| University of Missouri-<br>St. Louis                                              | Tansie J. Mayor, Jr.          | Tansie J. Mayor, Jr.          |
| Washington University                                                             | Robert Riley                  | Robert Riley                  |
| Fontbonne, Lindenwood &<br>Maryville Colleges                                     | Dona Gallagher                | Andrew Jackson                |
| Harris Teachers College,<br>Southern Illinois<br>University, & Webster<br>College | John Robinson                 | Kathryn Rogers                |

During the 1971-73 extension of the project, the instructor and counselors continued to serve project students along with other, often similar ones enrolled at FPCC. No coordinators were retained during the extension, but their functions were absorbed by the counselors and by staff members of the senior colleges and universities.

Students. Students were enrolled in the project at six starting points as follows:

|                   | Men | Women | Total |
|-------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| Fall 1969 -----   | 112 | 132   | 244   |
| Spring 1970 ----- | 30  | 26    | 56    |
| Summer 1970 ----- | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| Fall 1970 -----   | 62  | 101   | 163   |
| Spring 1971 ----- | 15  | 26    | 41    |
| Fall 1971 -----   | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| Total -----       | 219 | 287   | 506   |

The larger enrollment of women is characteristic of Forest Park Community College where AHEAD students began, but opposite the national trend.

|        | Number | In AHEAD | In FPCC | Nationally |
|--------|--------|----------|---------|------------|
| Men    | 219    | 43.3%    | 48.5%   | 54.9%      |
| Women  | 287    | 56.7%    | 51.5%   | 45.1%      |
| Totals | 506    | 100.0%   | 100.0%  | 100.0%     |

One major reason for the greater percentage of women was the number of women over 25 years old who were enrolled in the program. Three-fourths of the older enrollees were women, 43 compared with only 15 men.

Although the project enrolled students aged 16 to 46, it included almost double the proportion of older enrollees that is characteristic of the national picture. On the other hand, because Forest Park Community College enrolls an unusually large proportion of adults, older participants in Project AHEAD were not out of place age-wise in their first college experience.

|                        | AHEAD | National | FPCC  |
|------------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| 26 and Older Enrollees | 11.5% | 6.2%     | 24.5% |

All students in the project were poor and needed financial assistance. Nearly all were black and from the inner city. Although they had earned high school diplomas or GED certificates, many had poor high school grades and poor study skills. Their counselors observed that they had very low levels of self-esteem, they had done little or no planning for the future, and they did not trust programs or program personnel. They included, e.g., a bright girl who had supported herself through her inner city high school program, a 19 year old veteran, a 19 year old ward of the state who had known little other than disappointment and failure, a 27 year old mother receiving Aid to Dependent Children, a 29 year old divorcee with three children, a 30 year old father who had dropped out at the end of third grade, a 36 year old factory worker who hoped to become a nurse, and a 46 year old grandmother.

In a February 1971 report the project director described enrollees as including 30% who had done poorly in high school, 15% unwed mothers on Aid to Dependent Children, 10% unemployed between ages 30 and 45, 15% who never finished high school, and 30% who faced a welter of problems.

#### Student Achievement

Overall results for the 506 students in Project AHEAD may be summarized as follows:

|                |     |        |
|----------------|-----|--------|
| Graduated      | 38  | 7.5%   |
| Still Enrolled | 83  | 16.4%  |
| Withdrew       | 385 | 76.1%  |
| Total          | 506 | 100.0% |

(Since seven graduates of two-year programs still are enrolled for additional degrees, there are actually 90 students or 17.8% of the total still enrolled.) Based on the criteria of achieving a degree or persistence toward a degree to date, the summary shows that 121 or 23.9% of project students, almost one-fourth, were successful.

Graduates. The 38 who graduated completed two- or four-year programs during the four years of the project as follows:

- 17 -- career programs at FPCC
- 11 -- other programs at FPCC
- 1 -- baccalaureate program at Fontbonne College
- 3 -- baccalaureate programs at Maryville College
- 6 -- baccalaureate programs at St. Louis University

Although they constituted only 7.5% of project enrollees, these 38 students might never have started college and probably would have settled for lower levels of productivity and self-fulfillment were it not for Project AHEAD. Having succeeded in the program they should experience greater personal satisfaction and make a greater social contribution. For example, those who completed career programs at Forest Park Community College now offer society the services of:

- 6 nurses
- 4 dental assistants
- 1 dental hygienist
- 2 medical office assistants
- 1 clinical lab technologist
- 1 engineering technologist
- 1 clerk typist
- and 1 data processor

The variety of skills which four-year graduates will bring to society is illustrated in the majors of those attending St. Louis University in spring 1973:

- 1 -- Communications disorders
- 2 -- English
- 1 -- Finance
- 2 -- Liberal arts
- 1 -- Medical records
- 7 -- Nursing
- 1 -- Political science
- 4 -- Social service
- 1 -- Sociology

Among the graduates claimed by Project AHEAD are students who overcame very difficult circumstances on the way to their degrees. One was a 29 year old divorcee and mother of three who had been denied admission to college years earlier because, though a good high school student, she had failed her admissions examination. She started in Project AHEAD in fall 1969 with courses designed to remedy weaknesses in her basic skills. By winter she was accepted for transfer by St. Louis University as a full-fledged student with a four-year scholarship. To support her children she took a part-time job in a college office. First she made the dean's list at the University, soon won a Danforth Metropolitan Award for outstanding achievement, and then earned her degree in spring 1973.

Another had an even more dramatic experience. She was a very bright student who worked her way through high school. Her mother did day work to support four children. Her oldest brother kept the family in disarray by stealing to support his drug habit. In confusion and poverty, this young woman felt that she would never get to college despite her great desire to do so. Then her assistant principal was employed by Project AHEAD. He contacted the young woman immediately, counseled at length with her and her mother, and sold the idea of her enrolling. After one semester she transferred to Fontbonne College with a four-year scholarship but with

great doubts that she could continue. As a matter of fact, during the next summer she delivered a child and decided that her college career was ended. Then the project staff extended itself to the limit for her, helped her with numerous problems like babysitting, and persuaded her to return to Fontbonne in fall 1970. She succeeded academically, graduated in June 1973 and obtained a teaching position with the city of St. Louis.

Persisters. The 90 students still enrolled in spring 1973 were studying at either Forest Park Community College or one of thirteen senior colleges:

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| FPCC -----            | 46 |
| Senior Colleges ----- | 44 |
| Total -----           | 90 |

Many continued at FPCC beyond the usual two years because, having to work, they could attend only part-time. They spread their studies over extra terms (semesters and summer sessions) as follows:

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| 5 - 6 terms -----  | 59 |
| 7 - 8 terms -----  | 35 |
| 9 - 11 terms ----- | 5  |

The 44 students still enrolled in senior colleges in spring 1973 constituted only half of those who had achieved transfer. Some had graduated and many had dropped out:

|                    |    |       |      |
|--------------------|----|-------|------|
| Graduated -----    | 10 | ----- | 12%  |
| Dropped out -----  | 32 | ----- | 37%  |
| Still enrolled --- | 44 | ----- | 51%  |
| Total -----        | 86 | ----- | 100% |

The complete record of these transfer students is shown in Appendix III.

Illustrative of the persistent students among the transfers is a divorced mother of four who lacked finances to enroll in college after completing high school as an honor student. She was recruited for Project AHEAD at a bus stop on her way to work. After several persuasive contacts, she enrolled in the project part-time, completed a year at FPCC, then transferred to the University of Missouri/St. Louis. In May 1973 she called to tell the project director that she had just obtained a higher-paying job at IBM, but that she was now determined to complete a degree at the University.

Age. Older students like the one just cited did particularly well in the project. Of 58 over 25 years old, 43% were successful on the criteria of graduation or persistence compared with 21% for younger students. Thus, older students demonstrated twice the rate of success of younger students.

Further evidence bears out the same conclusion. Older students contributed only 12% of those enrolled in the project at FPCC, but 29% of those graduated. Among project students who attended only FPCC, 53% of the older ones compared with 34% overall persisted through three or more semesters. All (100%) of the four older students transferring to St. Louis University were successful compared with 41% of the 27 younger students.

Scholarship. A study of available grade point averages showed a close relationship between persistence and scholarship. Among those who dropped out of the project within one semester, only 27% earned C averages or better. Of those who persisted at least three terms, 77% earned averages of C or better. In other words, students earning C averages or better were about three times as likely as poorer students to stay in Project AHEAD.

#### Withdrawals

Of the 506 students enrolled in Project AHEAD, 353 or 70% withdrew from the program while at FPCC. In an effort to learn who they were and why they withdrew, the file of every tenth one was studied. An attempt was made to follow up these 35 by telephone but only seven or their families were still accessible.

In the sample of 35, 16 were men, 19 women; 32 were under 25 and 3 over; 29 earned high school diplomas, 5 G.E.D. certificates, and 1 had no record; 10 did not complete the first semester, 14 completed one semester, 3 two semesters, 2 three semesters, and 6 four or more semesters; 25 attended school in the daytime, 4 in the evening, 5 both daytime and evening, and 1 was unreported; those who completed only one semester earned a 1.9 grade point average while those who completed more than one semester earned 2.0.

Finances. In only 19 cases were reasons for withdrawal cited in the 35 students' cumulative records, but of these 19, 11 withdrew for financial reasons. Since Project AHEAD underwrote only half their tuition, they still had to pay the other half of tuition, transportation, lunch and other living expenses. A 34 year old mother of six, e.g., who worked as an LPN at Barnes Hospital, enrolled toward a degree in nursing, but had to withdraw after one semester because she couldn't handle the additional financial burden. A 17 year old boy who ranked 28 of 88 in his graduating class at an archdiocesan high school completed 6 credits in fall 1970 with a 2.4 grade point average, then left because he had to support himself. For a youth as bright as he (in a paper for a group guidance class he wrote with unusual insight, "It seems therefore evident to me that the ability to be successful in college is the ability to elude the rush and set your own pace"), it is fortunate that he still hopes to return to college and pursue his goal of commercial art.

A 19 year old who completed 26 credits in two years with a C average wrote, "Education means a lot to me because my parents didn't have the opportunity," but he had to withdraw in order to support his mother, a heart patient, and his two sisters. While working he became implicated in narcotics traffic, was sent to a federal reformatory, but wants to return to college when he is released.

Other Factors. There were reasons for withdrawal other than finances -- illness, accident, military service, marriage, dissatisfaction with not receiving credit for initial remedial courses, personal problems, and combinations of circumstances. An 18 year old, e.g. withdrew in his fifth semester with depression and other emotional problems. Another

young man, who dropped out during his first semester, admitted three years later that he "was not really ready to go to college right after high school. I wanted to get a job and earn some money on my own." An intelligent 19 year old got involved in too many problems, like a fight and an arrest for disturbing the peace during a picketing demonstration, to continue studies. Another young woman did well at FPCC and planned to prepare for nursing, but left because of finances, disappointment that her initial remedial courses were not more challenging, and marriage.

A 35 year old woman who had dropped out of school in 11th grade, married, produced 5 children in four years, then separated, became aware of the growing need for blacks to get an education. She finished high school and entered Project AHEAD, writing, "I wish to become useful in some way to all people, especially people who are dear to me, the poor. Eventually I hope to work in ghettos across the country and strengthen them with unity. May God grant me this wish. I want to drain the instructors of all their knowledge, also drive them crazy with questions about every subject there is. I want all of the why's and how come's they have." She earned 14 credits in her first semester with a 2.6 average. But her job, illness, and family problems forced her to withdraw. She wrote, "Due to serious illness which caused a great strain on me, I have to withdraw from Project AHEAD. Corporation for which I work has already committed themselves to paying for my tuition in full for summer sessions... I no longer have a car and can't make it out to school. I am down, but not out... P. S. See you in the summer." In three subsequent semesters she enrolled but withdrew before completion. In spring 1972 she completed a course in American history with a grade of B.

Stopouts. Five of the sample of students who withdrew from Project AHEAD returned to college at a later date on their own. They should be considered "stopouts" rather than "dropouts." By extrapolation from the sample, it is estimated that almost 10% of Project AHEAD students were stopouts. This is about the same re-entry rate as experienced by FPCC as a whole, which averaged 9.5% over the eight semesters from fall 1969 through spring 1973.

A young woman of 19, e.g., dropped out of Project AHEAD after three semesters but later returned two semesters on her own to take some secretarial courses. Working now as a secretary for a publishing house, she hopes to return to college again for a degree in business administration.

A young man who moved to Texas after completing four semesters in Project AHEAD wrote for advice from the Dean of Student Services at FPCC. He was referred to St. Louis University. There he has completed 105 of 120 necessary degree credits, he has earned a 2.3 grade point average, and he is planning a career in teaching mathematics.

Thus, the success rate based on the graduation and persistence of Project AHEAD students probably is higher than the 24% recorded to date. A member of the withdrawal sample, e.g., called attention to a friend who also dropped out of Project AHEAD but entered Harris Teachers College a year later on his own. There, by the end of the project, he completed 100 of 128 credits required for elementary teaching with a 2.4 average.

Implications. Thus, some of the 70% of students who withdrew from Project AHEAD at FPCC must be considered successes because they persisted in college on their own. Many others were partial successes, that is, they

obtained part of a college education even if not a degree. Of the 506 students in the project 298 or 59% completed two or more terms.

In 208 or 41% of the cases, however, project students completed one term or less. They were the failures or near-failures in Project AHEAD. Apparently they failed more because of inadequate financing than for any other reason. Even so, some of them and of the partial successes may prove to be stopouts rather than dropouts. In this respect it is significant that the withdrawn students who could be reached in the sample study expressed a positive attitude toward higher education and hoped they could continue some time in the future. Perhaps their new-found or reinforced interest in higher education will lead to their choosing it as a major goal for their children and their supporting it as citizens and tax payers.

It is possible that attrition rates would have been lower for subsequent groups of students if the project had continued. Notice that the rate of immediate attrition dropped with each new group of enrollees in FPCC:

| Term        | No. of New Students | First Term Withdrawals |          |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------|
|             |                     | Numbers                | Per Cent |
| Fall 1969   | 244                 | 145                    | 59%      |
| Spring 1970 | 56                  | 25                     | 45%      |
| Fall 1970   | 163                 | 46                     | 28%      |
| Spring 1971 | 41                  | 8                      | 20%      |

Perhaps project personnel acquired more and more skill in preventing dropouts. This factor invites further investigation.

### Evaluations

Student Evaluations. A student evaluation of Project AHEAD was conducted in October 1972 when the 67 current students were asked to write their comments on an anonymous evaluation form. The form included questions on the purpose of the project; its good and bad points; the counseling, classes, tutoring, and financial aid; and whether it satisfied student needs.

About half the students -- 35 -- responded. All of them evaluated the project favorably. Occasionally they were laudatory, as in the following excerpts:

"Purpose of Project AHEAD I think was to help, and it really did do just that for me. I thank God for Project AHEAD without which I might not of made it. Thanks again."

"In my opinion, I think Project AHEAD is the best program ever established for the black students. As far as the counseling and tutoring etc. it has helped me to find myself, and make up my mind just what it is I want out of life in general."

"At first I thought Project AHEAD was only for money, but I found out later that it was a lot more than just money. There were people who were always willing to help and listen."

"The project did more than I was looking for. They did everything they could to try to keep you in school like help you get tutoring and financial aid and making you believe that you can make it."

A few students made negative comments about the amount of financial aid, the difficulty of transferring to senior colleges, the number of counselors, and the difficulty of getting appointments with counselors. Six of the comments on counseling were partly negative, but 22 were wholly positive. Two comments about financial aid were negative, but 20 were positive.

Concerning counseling, favorable comments brought out the counselors' availability to students, concern, and helpfulness. Counselors "were always willing to help and listen," "making you believe you can make it," "deeply involved and concerned about the student being on the ball with his classes." Negative comments were minor: "Sometimes it's difficult for me to make an appointment with my counselor because of my program"; "should be more counselors to help these we have."

Teachers and tutors were similarly praised -- "look out for the best interests of their students"; "interested in their students and willing to help them"; "really help me in my weaker areas"; "the classes I had were wonderful."

On financial aid the students were all grateful for "the money for classes with no static"! "It made a way for poor people who wanted further education." Negative comments were really backhanded compliments: "Like any other progress funded by the government, there is never enough of money."

Occasionally students recognized that they didn't take advantage of all the help and opportunities provided in the project. Several expressed disappointment, for the sake of future students, that the project was being terminated: "This means the end of some people because of this they won't go no farther than high school"; "I hope students will get another fine program like this one."

In other words, student evaluation of Project AHEAD in fall 1972 was very favorable. Perhaps the outcome was predictable because the respondents all had participated in the program for at least 2 1/2 semesters, some for 4 1/2. Nevertheless, their responses were so consistently positive that only a strong program could have elicited them.

Staff Evaluations. Interviews with the project director, Richard Reynolds, and the two best-informed counselors, George Brantley and Ruth Lewis, yielded strongly positive evaluations of Project AHEAD. The counselors characterized the project as successful because it demonstrated that many students from a disadvantaged background could succeed at both Forest Park Community College and four-year institutions. The impact of this demonstration on the colleges, they believe, will be positive and lasting. They believe that the colleges learned to judge students on the basis of individual performance and demonstrated abilities rather than standardized test scores. They feel that lasting contacts established between FPCC and the four-year institutions will help future transfer students. Since they were invited to participate in workshops and conferences by the Civil Service, armed services, and other community agencies, they believe Project AHEAD made it possible to enlarge community understanding of minorities and disadvantaged students. Perhaps their reactions are best summarized in Mrs. Lewis' regular staff report of September 1970:

"I continue to enjoy my new job and find it very rewarding. The students are highly motivated, concerned and cooperative. A program of this type should have been initiated years ago. It definitely is providing a public service to the St. Louis community. The program gives hope to many persons who had given up and to those who were seeking a way to improve themselves."

Fortunately for future students at FPCC, Mrs. Lewis and Mr. Brantley have been added to the regular counseling staff.

In part as a consequence of his success in directing Project AHEAD, Mr. Reynolds has been employed as Coordinator of Personnel for the St. Louis-St. Louis County Junior College District. He characterized the project as very successful for several reasons. It increased the number of blacks in higher education; it helped them become producers by training them for jobs and participation in the economy; it changed the values and outlook of some black students by teaching them to work within the system and by showing them that the establishment was interested in helping them; it placed more qualified blacks in administrative staff positions at St. Louis area colleges; it helped these colleges see better the problems faced by disadvantaged and minority students.

Mr. Reynolds believes that since Project AHEAD recruited mainly high-risk students who had not had high achievement records in high schools, more were successful than could be expected for students with so many handicaps and problems. He also believes that the successes of Project AHEAD cannot be determined only by the number of students receiving two-year or four-year college degrees, but that many students can be considered successes if they found a job, got married, became good consumers and good citizens.

The main disappointment Mr. Reynolds expressed in Project AHEAD was the insufficiency of funds to meet the unusual needs of high-risk students. He said more funds were needed to aid students directly, particularly for financial emergencies. He also expressed disappointment that funds were not available to continue the project after foundation funds were exhausted.

Institutional Evaluations. Inquiries of key administrators in the institutions which participated in Project AHEAD indicated that the institutions sustained at least four effects. The most tangible was an immediate increase in black enrollment and in special services to black students.

Next most apparent was a strong impetus to develop ways to make higher education available to and viable for low-income, minority students. The publicity given to establishment of the project with substantial foundation support and the competent presentation of information and viewpoints on disadvantaged students by the able project staff influenced feelings and attitudes on the campus and in the community. One administrator described it as "the right program at the right moment" in making college administrators and faculties aware of the importance of recruiting minority students and of the problems faced by these students on campus. Simultaneous with Project AHEAD, therefore, the institutions accelerated recruitment of low-income minority students, expanded financial aid to disadvantaged students, and developed new procedures and services to help these high-risk students

achieve success. These services then became regular, on-going functions of the colleges, and the goal of enrolling a large percentage of disadvantaged students became permanent.

In discussing the effect of Project AHEAD upon their institutions, administrators frequently noted that inadequate financial aid for students was the most serious obstacle to the success of the program. Poor students required full tuition scholarships and financial aid for most expenses. Private colleges, therefore, had particularly great difficulty providing support for more than a few of these students. As a consequence, transferring students often did not have a real choice of four-year institution.

A third impact of the project was the appointment of several black educators to permanent administrative positions in area colleges, universities, and schools. The Project Director was named Coordinator of Personnel for the Junior College District. Two counselors became regular FPCC counselors, one the first black counselor at Meramec Community College, another the director of a program for alcoholics at St. Louis State Hospital. One coordinator became vice-president of the State Community College of East St. Louis, one became director of the Experiment for Higher Education in East St. Louis for Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, one became the assistant for student services to the superintendent of University City Schools, and another became an assistant principal in Berkeley School District.

Finally, the project was cited as a very significant cooperative experience for all members of HECC. The spirit of cooperation was described by one administrator as a genuine and unselfish willingness on the part of institutional staff to cut red tape and evolve workable solutions to problems of students. There was increased acceptance and utilization of atypical selection and admissions criteria by the senior colleges. Better institutional relationships developed as project coordinators participated in institutional meetings on student selection and financial aid. The project director was appointed by the Chancellor of Washington University to a university committee to discuss and formulate non-traditional admission policies and procedures for that institution. Essentially, the prospects for further interinstitutional cooperation were enhanced.

#### Illinois Program

A component of Project AHEAD was conducted by Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville for 100 students from the Metro-East area, using \$95,966 of Ford Foundation funds to underwrite the necessary staff. Essentially, 50 students were enrolled in 1969-70 (42 for first semester and 8 transfers from AHEAD for second semester) and 50 more in fall 1970 in the University's Experiment in Higher Education (EHE) in East St. Louis. EHE dated back to 1966, when it was established with funds from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity and the Illinois State Legislature. It emphasized the same supportive services which characterized Project AHEAD, it offered two years of college work in East St. Louis, and it encouraged students to continue with baccalaureate studies. Most who continued enrolled at the main campus of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

Looser criteria were applied in admitting students to the EHE phase of Project AHEAD -- e.g. a foreign student and several students with previous college education were included. Nevertheless, enrollment fell considerably short of the projection for this phase of the project. Perhaps differences in the nature of students enrolled in EHE and AHEAD produced differences in their results. Data were not available to test this hypothesis. The following analysis, therefore, is based upon but restricted to known differences.

There was one recorded major difference between EHE and Project AHEAD: EHE students received ample financial help. They received four-year full tuition Board of Trustees Scholarships from the University, 15 hour per week federal work-study jobs, and, where necessary, national defense or state loans. By comparison, only a few students fully supported by private colleges and universities receive as much from Project AHEAD.

As a consequence, EHE was singularly successful. The combination of strong supportive services and full financial aid produced a superior retention record, as follows:

|                |            |             |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| Graduated      | 12         | 12%         |
| Still enrolled | 55         | 55%         |
| Withdrew       | 32         | 32%         |
| Deceased       | 1          | 1%          |
|                | <u>100</u> | <u>100%</u> |

The EHE retention rate of 67% was almost triple the 24% rate for Project AHEAD.

EHE produced many encouraging success stories to supplement those cited for Project AHEAD. One mother of five grown children whose husband had been disabled for many years will graduate in August 1973. Two graduates in June 1973 won University honors awards. Three married couples are successful degree candidates. And one EHE student was vice-president of student government at the University in 1972-73.

Experiment in Higher Education, even more than Project AHEAD, demonstrated that disadvantaged students can succeed in higher education. By comparison with Project AHEAD it demonstrated that an excellent instructional and counseling program is not enough for excellent results. The best results are achieved when students are relieved of economic pressure through scholarship aid and work opportunities.

#### Costs

Funds were available to Project AHEAD for two purposes, educational services and financial aid. They are discussed separately here because they came from different sources and treated different needs.

Educational Services. Educational services consisted of special instruction and counseling, usually referred to as supporting services. Funds for them came from three sources, as follows:

|                          |                  |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Ford Foundation -----    | \$399,908        |
| HECC Institutions -----  | 168,966          |
| Interest and Misc. ----- | 2,279            |
|                          | <u>\$571,153</u> |

These funds were divided between Project AHEAD and the associated phase of EHE. Expenditures for AHEAD were well over three times as great as expenditures for EHE, but this was only because AHEAD served five times as many students. As a matter of fact, expenditures per student were much greater for EHE, as shown in the following tabulation:

|                    | <u>Educational Services</u> | <u>No. Students</u> | <u>Expenditures<br/>Per Student</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Project AHEAD      | \$445,417                   | 506                 | \$ 880                              |
| Exp. in Higher Ed. | 125,736                     | 100                 | 1257                                |
| Total              | <u>\$571,153</u>            | <u>606</u>          | <u>\$ 943</u>                       |

Data on student credit hours that would permit more precise comparisons are not available, but the basic point is clear -- EHE spent 44% more per student for supporting services and presumably, therefore, offered much more extensive instructional and counseling help per student than did Project AHEAD. This fact undoubtedly accounts somewhat for the superior retention of EHE students.

HECC institutions shared the institutional costs of the project in proportion to their involvement, as follows:

|                                                                                                                                                                                    |                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| St. Louis-St. Louis County Junior College District .....                                                                                                                           | \$128,114        |
| Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville .....                                                                                                                                    | 29,770           |
| Others (Fontbonne, Harris Teachers, Lindenwood,<br>Maryville, and Webster Colleges; St. Louis<br>University, University of Missouri-St. Louis,<br>and Washington University) ..... | 11,092           |
| Total .....                                                                                                                                                                        | <u>\$168,966</u> |

The Junior College District incurred extensive expenditures for instructional and counseling staff, equipment, and materials. The other colleges underwrote fringe benefits for the Coordinators assigned to them.

Financial Aid. The major source of financial aid to students enrolled in Project AHEAD was a Danforth grant of \$100,000 for students enrolled in Forest Park Community College during 1969-71, supplemented by an additional grant of \$20,000 for 1971-73. The grant was augmented at FPCC in three ways. First, a project scholarship fund was established to receive donations from church groups, voluntary associations, private corporations, and individual contributors. Second, the cooperation of certain government agencies in assisting needy students was obtained, especially the Missouri State Employment Service, the Missouri Division of Welfare, and the Human Development Corporation (local extension of the U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity). And finally, the Junior College District established a 90-day loan fund on a one-time basis for students unable to pay their part of tuition.

The Danforth grant was used entirely for tuition grants and book allowances at FPCC, amounting, on the average, to \$237 per student. Only half of tuition was granted during the first 2 1/2 years of the project when enrollment was large. Full tuition was granted during the final year and a half. Resources supplementary to the Danforth grant were tapped occasionally for additional tuition aid and book allowances and regularly for assistance with other needs such as transportation.

When project students transferred to senior colleges and universities they had to obtain financial help from new sources. Project coordinators facilitated this process, but it succeeded because the institutions extended the full range of their grant, work, and loan resources to accommodate these students.

As noted before, the situation was quite different in EHE. Every student was given a four year Board of Trustees scholarship covering full tuition and fees. If the student was not already appropriately employed he was provided a 15 hour per week job under the federal Work Study program. Then if he needed additional help, he was given access to federal or state loans.

EHE students, therefore, were twice as well off as AHEAD students on tuition alone. In addition they had the security, convenience, and dignity of work as part of the supporting services of the program to cover most of their additional expenses.

During 1969-71, therefore, Southern Illinois University spent over \$50,000 in scholarship aid for students in the EHE phase of Project AHEAD, and probably \$40,000 since. It also spent \$24,304 on student wages and paid out \$93,219 in federal Work Study funds during the two years it was associated with Project AHEAD. In other words, EHE expended considerably more in financial aid than Project AHEAD for one-fifth the number of students!

It is not possible to report the exact amount of aid awarded per student, but it averaged about \$300 per student in Project AHEAD and over \$2,000 per student in EHE.

Implications. Thus, it may be concluded that adequate supportive services and financial aid for disadvantaged students are very expensive. Estimated costs per student range around \$3,000 -- \$1,000 for services and \$2,000 for aid -- but these figures must vary with the size of the program, the tuition of the institution, and other factors. These costs are additional to the per student costs of providing regular instruction and operating the college.

#### Summary and Conclusions

The findings of Project AHEAD may have been unique to the St. Louis metropolitan area. Their applicability elsewhere would have to be tested. But in this situation they led inexorably to certain conclusions. These conclusions and the findings which produced them may be summarized as follows:

1. Recruitment. The zeal which characterizes recruitment of talented students should be applied to high risk prospects. In Project AHEAD, many adults, young and old, who may not otherwise have attended college were reached through aggressive recruitment. Thus, their life prospects were transformed.
2. Staff. An experimental project may be as effective in discovering and developing black staff members as black students. Most Project AHEAD staff members became visible to the St. Louis higher education community during the project and were engaged permanently by that community and related institutions.

3. Curriculum. Compensatory education is not as stimulating and satisfying to disadvantaged students as credit-, career-, and degree-oriented curricula. Project AHEAD students proved to be as goal-oriented and reward-conscious as regular students. As a consequence, their initial uniform, non-credit curriculum was modified quickly in favor of individualized, credit programs.
4. Educational services. Strong counseling and supplementary instructional help can salvage many disadvantaged students. In Project AHEAD these supporting services encouraged a fourth of the students sufficiently to hold them in college despite their having to pay personally for half their tuition and many incidental expenses.
5. Attrition. Heavy attrition of disadvantaged students is not inevitable. The low rate of 33% in the EHE phase of the project indicates that very favorable conditions can be established. The fact that first semester attrition at FPCC dropped from 59% in fall 1969 to 20% in spring 1971 suggests that rates drop as professional personnel acquire experience and preventive skills.
6. Degree of success. A worthwhile proportion of disadvantaged students can succeed in college. In Project AHEAD 1/4 and in EHE 2/3 persisted to the end of the project in a two- or four-year college program. Five of every eight who achieved transfer to a four-year program succeeded in it.
7. Stopouts. Many apparent dropouts resume college work when their circumstances permit. In Project AHEAD 10% of dropouts returned after taking off a semester or more to recoup their finances, motivation, health, or the like.
8. Age. Older disadvantaged students do better than younger ones. Those 26 and older in Project AHEAD persisted longer and earned degrees more often than their younger counterparts.
9. Grades. There is a close relationship between academic success and persistence among disadvantaged students. In Project AHEAD three times as many persisting students as withdrawing students obtained a C average or better.
10. Financial Aid. Maximum encouragement of disadvantaged students requires full financial aid for tuition and expenses. The EHE phase of Project AHEAD, which provided a full tuition scholarship, 15 hours work each week, and loans if necessary, was three times as successful as AHEAD, which provided a fraction as much financial aid.
11. Cost. Successful higher education of disadvantaged students is costly. In addition to the normal costs of instruction, about \$1,000 in extra educational services -- recruitment, remedial instruction, counseling, tutoring, etc. -- and \$2,000 in financial aid were necessary per student for excellent results in the EHE phase of Project AHEAD. Thus, a supplementary expenditure of \$3,000 per student in low-tuition (tax-supported) institutions and correspondingly higher sums in high-tuition (independent) institutions must be anticipated if Project AHEAD results are borne out by further experience.

12. Evaluation. A service project elicits enthusiastic support from its participants. Both students and staff members rated Project AHEAD very positively.
13. Institutional Change. Successful experiments change participating institutions permanently. Project AHEAD had four effects upon participating institutions -- it increased their enrollment of poor black students, their services to and viability for black students, and their employment of black staff members, and it fostered the idea of interinstitutional cooperation.
14. Cooperation. Colleges and universities can cooperate effectively in pursuit of mutually desirable goals. Ten cooperated well on Project AHEAD. These ten were involved simultaneously in pursuing the same goals through their own programs, they did not have to pledge resources needed for other priorities -- much of the cost was borne by foundations, and they encountered no policies or procedures which required that they yield autonomy in order to participate in the project.

Appendix I.

PROJECT AHEAD POLICY COMMITTEE

1969-1971

Rev. Paul C. Reinert, S.J., Chairman  
President, St. Louis University

Dr. John A. Brown  
President, Lindenwood Colleges

Dr. Lattie F. Coor  
Vice-Chancellor, Washington University

Dr. Joseph P. Cosand  
President, St. Louis-St. Louis County Junior College District

Dr. Glen R. Driscoll  
Chancellor, University of Missouri-St. Louis

Mr. C. W. Duffy  
Chairman, Higher Education Coordinating Council of Metropolitan  
St. Louis

Dr. John S. Rendleman  
President, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

Dr. Richard A. Stumpe  
President, Harris Teachers College

Staff

Mr. Richard H. Reynolds  
Director, Project AHEAD

Dr. Donald Henderson  
Director, Experiment in Higher Education

Mr. John Mueller  
Executive Director, Seven College Consortium

Mr. Harry A. Blanton, Recording Secretary  
Administrative Assistant to the President, St. Louis University

## Appendix II

## ENROLLMENT SUMMARY

| Term   | Enrollment In Forest Park Community College |          |       | No. of New Transfers |                |       |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|----------|-------|----------------------|----------------|-------|
|        | New<br>M                                    | New<br>F | Total | Returning<br>M       | Returning<br>F | Total |
| F '69  | 112                                         | 132      | 244   | 0                    | 0              | 0     |
| S '70  | 30                                          | 26       | 56    | 37                   | 62             | 99    |
| Su '70 | 0                                           | 1        | 1     | 9                    | 22             | 31    |
| F '70  | 62                                          | 101      | 163   | 33                   | 37             | 70    |
| S '71  | 15                                          | 26       | 41    | 53                   | 84             | 137   |
| Su '71 | 0                                           | 0        | 0     | 29                   | 32             | 61    |
| F '71  | 0                                           | 1        | 1     | 48                   | 77             | 125   |
| S '72  | 0                                           | 0        | 0     | 40                   | 76             | 116   |
| Su '72 | 0                                           | 0        | 0     | 13                   | 22             | 35    |
| F '72  | 0                                           | 0        | 0     | 17                   | 50             | 67    |
| S '73  | 0                                           | 0        | 0     | 15                   | 43             | 58    |
| Su '73 | 0                                           | 0        | 0     | 8                    | 13             | 21    |
| Totals | 219                                         | 287      | 506   | 37                   | 49             | 86    |

## Appendix III

## RECORD OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

| <u>HECC Institutions</u>                                         | <u>Number<br/>Transferred</u> | <u>Number<br/>Graduated</u> | <u>Number<br/>Current</u> | <u>Number<br/>Withdrawn</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fontbonne College                                                | 3                             | 1                           | 2                         | 0                           |
| Harris Teachers College                                          | 2                             | 0                           | 2                         | 0                           |
| Lindenwood Colleges                                              | 4                             | 0                           | 1                         | 3                           |
| Maryville College                                                | 4                             | 3                           | 1                         | 0                           |
| Saint Louis University                                           | 31                            | 6                           | 14                        | 11                          |
| Southern Illinois University<br>(Experiment in Higher Education) | 8                             | 0                           | 5                         | 3                           |
| University of Missouri-St. Louis                                 | 22                            | 0                           | 10                        | 12                          |
| Washington University                                            | 5                             | 0                           | 2                         | 3                           |
| Webster College                                                  | 2                             | 0                           | 2                         | 0                           |
| <u>Other Institutions</u>                                        |                               |                             |                           |                             |
| Central Missouri State                                           | 1                             | 0                           | 1                         | 0                           |
| Culver-Stockton                                                  | 1                             | 0                           | 1                         | 0                           |
| Kansas City Art Institute                                        | 2                             | 0                           | 2                         | 0                           |
| University of Missouri-Columbia                                  | <u>1</u>                      | <u>0</u>                    | <u>1</u>                  | <u>0</u>                    |
| Totals                                                           | 86                            | 10                          | 44                        | 32                          |

## Appendix IV

## DISPOSITION OF FOUNDATION GRANTS

Income

|                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Ford Foundation Grant -----     | \$399,908.00        |
| Danforth Foundation Grant ----- | 120,000.00          |
| Interest -----                  | 3,201.82            |
| Gifts and Miscellaneous -----   | 280.92              |
|                                 | <u>\$523,390.74</u> |

Expenditures

|                                 |              |                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Project AHEAD                   |              |                     |
| Administration -----            | \$ 32,000.00 |                     |
| Counseling & Coordination ----- | 206,492.92   |                     |
| Instruction -----               | 46,229.85    |                     |
| Secretarial -----               | 16,392.51    |                     |
| Miscellaneous -----             | 5,106.29     |                     |
|                                 |              | \$306,221.57        |
| Experiment in Higher Education  |              |                     |
| Counseling -----                | \$ 28,428.00 |                     |
| Instruction -----               | 59,288.00    |                     |
| Secretarial -----               | 8,249.50     |                     |
|                                 |              | \$ 95,965.50        |
| Financial Aid to Students       |              |                     |
| Tuition -----                   | \$119,848.10 |                     |
| Books and Miscellaneous -----   | 1,355.57     |                     |
|                                 |              | <u>\$121,203.67</u> |
|                                 |              | \$523,390.74        |

Note. The Ford Foundation grant was applied entirely to the educational services designated above for Project AHEAD and the Experiment in Higher Education. The Danforth Foundation grant was applied entirely to financial aid to students in Project AHEAD.